

curricula does not engender more intolerant or socially divided student populations. Further, school choice in a European context is not seen to be a solution to poor performing schools. In this sense, the diverse European attitudes ranging from the Dutch to the French see choice in education as part of the offerings of their modern liberal democracies and not as a vehicle of educational reform.

After reading this volume, one is left to wonder about the future of school choice in its various forms around the globe. Will the liberal democratic countries discussed in the volume continue to support choice even if immigrant groups seek to set up schools with illiberal curricula? Will school choice advocates in the U.S. see that other countries do not think of choice as reform? With the excellent foundation laid by this volume the dialogue around these types of questions can be advanced from a much stronger base of knowledge. Undoubtedly, more collaborations of this sort that mix public policy, philosophy and international educational contexts would certainly be welcomed by scholars and policy-makers alike.

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The Ethics of Identity, Kwame Anthony Appiah. Princeton, NJ, Princeton University Press, 2005. Pp. 400. Hbk. £18.95/\$29.95.

Appiah's latest book does something distinctive: it shows why we need to take another look at very familiar dimensions of identity, those dimensions of our personhood that encompass cultural loyalties, moral responsibilities towards others, and the ethical life. Indeed, Appiah's book is a kind of answer to an ancient Socratic question, that is, what sort of person one aims to be. *The Ethics of Identity* is an apt title, for the arguments contained within make the case that *who* we are is often defined by *what* we are, whether we are conscious of this fact or not. This insight, as venerably ancient as it is currently in vogue, is examined here with renewed vigour and nuance.

Appiah is particularly convincing in his describing the journey of the ethical life, the *becoming* versus the elusive end product. He appraises the manner in which the sort of person we endeavour to become is not only characterised by chance and contingency but also inseparably bound up with our connections and obligations to others. The challenge, of course, is in ascertaining the extent to which each of us is obligated to the other—and Appiah underscores the necessity of ethical partiality—but also the extent to which each of us is circumscribed by our manifold identities. Persons pursue their life projects and engage with the needs of others as individuals with constitutive attachments—for example, various

nationalities, religious and sexual identities, vocational functions, family ties, language groups and ethnicities. One's ethical projects, he eloquently summarises, 'flow from a universe of social facts' (p. 198). Appiah succeeds in demonstrating how shaping (or, altering) one's identity is an *ethical* enterprise—that is, a 'soul making'—and in recent memory, few have illuminated the prism of culture-self-identity so well.

One of the important contributions of Appiah's book is a sustained discussion on the meaning and scope of autonomy. Appiah affirms the centrality of autonomy, yet he is also mindful of the fact that its devotees 'want it to be as common as crabgrass', yet talk 'as if it is a rare orchid, and just as particular about soil and climate' (p. 38). Yet the trouble with much of the talk about autonomy, Appiah claims, is that typical notions of autonomy (that is, that it requires freedom from coercion, an adequate array of options, and the capacity to reflect upon and identify with one's rational choices) do not take sufficient account of the fact that each of us borrows heavily from received conventional attitudes and norms. Autonomy must also admit of degrees; in some instances, autonomy entails a condition for choosing while in others it signals a restraint upon choice. The capacity to choose from a variety of options or to reflect upon one's choices cannot be unilaterally applied. Thus autonomy, owing to its distinct purposes, must mean very different things to different people in different contexts, and reasons and causes need not proceed in lockstep. Not only must autonomy be adequate to its own constitutive project; we must never lose sight of the fact that 'it is the state and society that provide us with the tools and the contexts of our authorship; we may shape our selves, but others shape our shaping' (p. 156). Throughout, Appiah invokes famous examples from history and literature to buttress this crucial point.

One also finds comparably thought-provoking discussions on the inherent problems with the idea of assuming a 'neutral' stance in the public domain, with the politics of cultural difference, with parental rights, with cosmopolitan values, with adaptive preference formation and, perhaps most incisively, with the assumed good derived from promoting diversity. Appiah is particularly astute in his handling of the controversial role of the state in preserving versus facilitating changes in identity, highlighting the important role that the state can play in ensuring opportunities that enable persons to pursue a life identified with from the inside. Thus, for some, anti-discrimination laws are also necessary to ensure the possibility that one can form identities with at least a modicum of the freedom that others take for granted. By accentuating differences, Appiah argues, one ignores both the false uniformity imposed from within groups (ordered and arranged by representative elites who attempt to enforce rules and expectations not all members endorse as valuable), but also those necessary human traits that draw attention to similarities that accordingly unite individuals. Indeed, Appiah contends that one is hard-pressed, absent of certain monist impulses, to summon the moral substance necessary to combat oppressive practices both within groups as well as in society at large. This means that 'there are certain norms or

uniformities that are useful in preserving a benign social order', or, put another way, 'some measure of homogeneity is a good thing' (p. 152).

Like his guru, John Stuart Mill, Appiah prizes above all the qualities of liberalism that safeguard dignity, freedom and autonomy without downplaying the cosmopolitan spirit with which these traits are to be attained. He believes in a universal human biology—here reference to our overwhelmingly shared genetic code is pertinent—while recognising that this shared biology does not function 'outside of symbolic contexts' (p. 252). Thus Appiah's cosmopolitanism is not uncritically universalist, for while it operates according to a moral epistemology it is irremediably infected with curiosity and good will to learn from others whose experiences speak to the human condition. He says,

We can agree, in fact, with many moments of judgment, even if we do not share the framework within which those judgments are made, even if we cannot identify a framework, even if there are not principles articulated at all. And, to the extent that we have problems finding our way into narratives or neighborhoods, such problems can occur just as easily with narratives and neighborhoods around the corner as they do with those from far away (p. 253).

Diversity broadens the purview from which persons may survey the good, and it has the potential to make such interaction truly rewarding. Yet diversity is to be embraced not for its own sake but for 'the human choices its enables' (p. 268). Other kinds of diversity, those which trample human rights and 'constrain more than they enable', are better avoided than embraced.

The Ethics of Identity, which at times suffers from an impossibly broad purview (alas, its impressive breadth is also its Achilles' heel), nevertheless succeeds in expanding vistas that philosophers of education might explore. Regardless of whether the accent is on multiculturalism or social justice, philosophers of education will find Appiah's insights concerning the ethical life judiciously sensitive both to the multi-layered complexity of identity and to the moral responsibilities to others—each with their own constitutive attachments—that our appeal to fundamental human rights requires. Our conception of rights, Appiah says, must recognise that realisation depends upon available resources and not just on political will. Likewise, rights that are highly determinate in application 'may not be thin enough to win widespread agreement [though] a conception of rights that's thin enough to win widespread agreement risks indeterminacy or impotence' (p. 264).

Particularly useful to philosophers of education are Appiah's discussions of both autonomy and diversity. Liberals have often wed these two things together, suggesting that autonomy derives in no small measure from a more diverse environment, which is likely, many argue, to enhance opportunities for comparing various perspectives and reflecting upon one's choices. (Granted, some liberals stress the need for a wider range of choice than others, some even insisting that a culturally coherent

upbringing is just as well suited to autonomy as a cosmopolitan one.) Yet given the eagerness with which schools, corporations and society generally race to embrace the idea that diversity is desirable at all times and everywhere, *The Ethics of Identity* issues a word of caution, and calls upon the reader to embrace our common humanity.

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Values, Education and the Human World, edited by John Haldane. Exeter, Imprint Academic, 2004. Pp. 274. Hbk. £29.90. Pbk. £14.95.

This volume of essays marks the launch of the series ‘St Andrews Studies in Philosophy and Public Affairs’ and consists of revised versions of the Victor Cook Memorial Lectures, a series of public lectures dedicated to the general theme of values and education. The collection’s editor, John Haldane, here assembles a distinguished cast of contributors—including the likes of Jonathan Sacks, Stewart Sutherland and Mary Warnock—which seeks to fuse intellectual rigour with the practical experience of issues relating to values and education in public life. In his introduction, Haldane is careful to stress that, while the collection will be of interest to a diverse range of subject specialists, ‘it is equally important that the general educated reader should engage with these discussions and they have been written with that purpose very much in mind’ (p. x). He elaborates on this point by appealing to Alasdair MacIntyre’s discussion, in his Edinburgh Gifford Lectures, of the idea of an ‘educated public’, and suggests that part of the purpose of the essays, and of the public lectures from which they are derived, is to address precisely that audience (p. xiii).

The contributors to the collection are not of a common mind when it comes to questions of values and education, but they do seem to share a broad outlook and, in particular, a sense that there is something terribly wrong with many of the prevailing assumptions informing the contemporary debate. Indeed, an impression of crisis permeates, to a greater or lesser extent, all of the essays in the collection. Following two helpful opening essays, by Haldane and David Carr, which seek to provide a theoretical background for the book, Anthony Quinton writes vigorously in defence of high culture and against those, primarily Continental, ‘radicals’ who have sought to unmask high culture, particularly as embodied in the canon, as an ‘elitist device’ (p. 49) constructed and constituted by the usual dead white suspects. The warning he issues is dire indeed: ‘I believe that if this revolution against familiar values prevails there will be a break in the continuity of our culture, larger even than that which constituted the Renaissance, and [that] is really more comparable to that which accompanied the fall of the Roman empire and its replacement

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